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NSC BRIEFING

23 April 1958

YUGOSLAV-SOVIET RELATIONS

- I. Bloc boycott of Yugoslav party congress now in session at Ljubljana (first since November 1952) and recent Soviet condemnation of Yugoslav party program are extremely serious blow to Yugoslav-Soviet relations.
 - A. All bloc countries followed Moscow's lead and withdrew their official delegations.
 - B. Likewise, bloc members, except Poland, are supporting Moscow's strong rebuttal of Yugoslav program.
 1. Poland recognized Yugoslavia's right to follow its own road to socialism although it agreed with Moscow on some points.
 - C. In lieu of delegations bloc assigned ambassadors to the congress as observers.
- II. On 18 April, Soviet journal Kommunist had condemned as non-Marxist virtually every principle of Yugoslav ideology as set forth in party program--250 pages long.
 - A. Kommunist stated that unless these non-Marxist views were dropped there is no hope for any future role for Yugoslavia in bloc.
- III. While Tito seriously concerned over dispute, there is little likelihood that he will knuckle under since concessions on main issues would represent abandonment of Yugoslav road to socialism.
 - A. Soviets told Yugoslavs on 5 April they would boycott congress. Yugoslavs then attempted to make changes in the foreign policy sections of their draft.

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1. Original draft blamed world tension equally on Free world and Sino-Soviet bloc. This was changed to standard line that aggressive West is entirely to blame, because bloc is peace-loving, etc.
 2. Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow attempted to sell their changes to Khrushchev on 15 April. He apparently refused to listen.
 3. On 17 April, Yugoslav's published their revised draft anyway. Following day Soviets issued their attack.
- B. Tito in speech at the congress emphatically confirmed Yugoslav road to socialism and took back some of the concessions made to the Soviets the previous week.
1. But his chief lieutenant Rankovic said "certain very responsible people who are our neighbors...are again sharpening the old and rusty weapons of the Cominform."
 2. All bloc ambassadors except Polish left during intermission in this speech and did not return.
 3. On the third day Kardelj, the chief theoretician and drafter of the program, made a relatively mild speech in which he also reiterated the thesis of separate roads to socialism.
- IV. Soviet attack on Yugoslav program was cast in terms of an ideological schism. If Yugoslavs refuse to concede, Yugoslavia may be in ideological isolation to a degree similar to that of 1948.
- A. Apparently on govt side Moscow and Belgrade still hope to avoid complete break as in 1948 and want to maintain diplomatic relations.

- B. Tito speech still supports most Soviet foreign policy objectives.
- C. The tone of Tito's speeches suggests, however, that he may be interested in regaining Western confidence as he praised US aid to which no strings were attached.
- V. Yugoslavs now in rather general isolation.
 - A. Western Europe's socialists have refused to attend congress because of Tito's treatment of Djilas.
 - B. Visit by Tito to Gomulka scheduled for late spring now assumes considerable significance.
 - C. Poles lately have been tightening down internally, supporting Soviet line externally.
 - 1. Have watered down "Workers Councils".
 - 2. Applied strong press censorship.
 - 3. Strengthened secret police.
 - 4. Adopted Soviet position on Hungarian revolution.
 - D. But now Polish reaction to Soviet-Yugoslav controversy suggests new period of stress between Khrushchev and Gomulka.